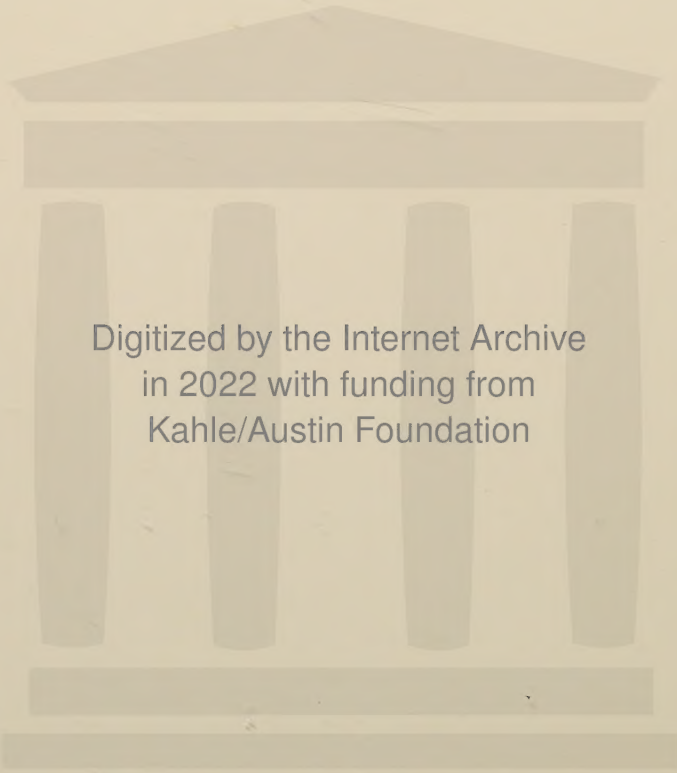


“REX”
and the
**Single
Girl**

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"REX" AND THE SINGLE GIRL

Books by Mary Ann Kelly

"Rex" and the Single Girl
My Old Kentucky Home, Good-night

“REX” AND THE SINGLE GIRL

Mary Ann Kelly



Exposition Press

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*To
all my "best friends"
in this book*

Behind Every Good Dog There's a Woman!

Let's begin this bowwow powwow with the most vital statistic on the barking minority in this country. About 26,000,000 American citizens are dogs. That's enough to start another political party. This would give speech makers of the present parties good reason to shout, "Don't let the country go to the dogs!" But if the dogs' party did carry an election, their administration could be justifiably in the dog-house. Then, too, politics really could be called a dog-eat-dog profession. And, of course, the dogs' liberation platform would call for a new government cabinet member—a dog-catcher catcher.

Just think of the campaign slogans that could get the dogs elected. "A mailman in every pot!" . . . "As Maine goes, so goes the Ken-I-ration!" . . . "I like Spike!" . . . "54/40 or bite!" . . . "What this country needs is a good 5¢ bone!" . . . "Tippecanoe and Tippy, too!" Then Shakespeare's aphorism also would ring true:

*Let Hercules himself do what he may
The cat will mew and dog will have his day.*

And don't forget the others who have written about the tail-waggers. Goldsmith, Swift, Trowbridge, Ruskin, Kipling, Pope, Byron, Scott, Wordsworth, Browning, Terhune, Thurber and many others have penned tributes to dogs. Even Pliny in his *Natural History* comments on the ancient Egyptian proverb: "Treat a thing as the dogs do the Nile." Always act with caution as the dogs do in drinking from the Nile, running along the bank rather than standing still, so the crocodiles

won't get them. And Seneca reminds us that dogs are not the only creatures that bark. "It is the practice of the multitude to bark at eminent men as dogs do at strangers."

But each of these dogs in literature, in history, in reality has been a man's best friend. Some, even a friend's best man! Which brings me to the characters I have known. I never met a dog I didn't like—regardless of face, breed or color.

I am his Highness, dog at Kew;

Pray tell me, sir, whose dog are you?

—ALEXANDER POPE

"On the Collar of a Dog"

On my tombstone, rather than a cross or a star or a crescent, there will be a dog bone with the inscription: "Here lies a good and faithful servant who was barked to death."

But even so, I am very much opposed to those who think that it's easier for a rich man to pass through the eye of a needle than for a camel to enter heaven. Who wants to go there if the animals aren't there? I hope the next world is just one big doghouse in the sky—with a self-filling water bowl, instant "supper dish," and a miraculous Yummy stick that will never dissolve and will part the Red Sea at the same time! Or at least conduct the Boston Pops.

How Do I Love Thee? Let Me Count the Strays

Let's start with the Rover rovers. Why are such creatures so appealing? How do I love thee? Let me count the strays. One was a big black knight of the road. He must have been the inspiration for the original shaggy dog story. He was at my door one zero morning. So I invited him in for a cup of coffee. And he stayed for weeks! The canine man who came to dinner. A real pooch-er. I did everything to get him to leave. I even made insinuating remarks: "I bet your family's worried about you." . . . "Haven't I seen you some place before, in Istanbul maybe?" . . . "The last Southern Railway train leaves at 10:00 tonight." . . . "Indians have captured the Chuck Wagon." . . . "You're barking up the wrong tree." But, alas, all to no avail. He was not the sensitive type. Instead, he was very dog-matic.

In no time he took over the house. And had me waiting on him hand and foot. Or paw and paw. I don't know who he thought he was. Maybe another World War I flying ace. That's probably it. AWOL from the 1917 German army. I didn't mind his taking the best chair by the fire, but I did mind his resting his hind paw-feet on my petit point footstool . . . even though his dogs were tired. That didn't get me as much, though, as dropping cigar ashes on my new rug. I continued the left-handed compliments: "You really think you're the cat's meow." . . . "I have a bone to pick with you." But he knew he was on a Gravy Train—and wouldn't budge. Finally when spring came he left me . . . broke.

Confessions of an Ad-Woman *(How I Went A-stray)*

Now don't think that stray dogs have had an affinity for me only at my home. They also looked me up at my office—thirty-one floors high! These downtown strays were corralled by the candy-stand lady in the street-level arcade and sent upward to my care via the building guard and the elevator. I ran the ASPCA of the working world. An office is enough of a white collar zoo without having stray dogs in it, too. My top filing drawer always contained a stray can of stray dog food with a stray can opener for my stray canine clients.

Often when I entered my office in the morning, there already were two woeful brown eyes peering out from under my desk. An early stray arrival. Then I had to keep the dog in the office all day until it was time to rush home in the rush hour. I would get on the back door of the crowded bus with a sweater over the dog's head so the driver wouldn't see the stowaway. But keeping each one under my desk out of sight and sound all day was quite a trick in a busy advertising agency. Rose was especially a problem. She had a wheeze. Every time I started to concentrate on my work she would start to wheeze. The man next to me thought the plumbing was stopped up and called the building repairman. And the woman across the hall offered me her tape recorder, thinking mine was jamming. Here all the time it was just Rose, secondhand Rose, the stray cocker spaniel under my desk with her asthma.

Looking at the poor little thing with her hapless, hopeless expression, I couldn't help but recall the writer Lamartine's words that when man is unhappy, God sends him a dog. And I'd add when a dog is unhappy, God sends him a woman.

This includes the time I was in Rome and threw the customary three coins in the fountain, making a wish for not one but three handsome Italians. And, of course, I got instead three unhandsome stray Italian dogs eternally following me around the Eternal City. These were my romantic Neopolitans with whom I unromantically sat on a curb, feeding them Neopolitan ice-cream bars.

I Threw Him a Bone . . . in My Leg

But the stray dog I'll never forget was a wild Indian who shall remain anonymous. Because he never remained at all. He came up on the elevator one day and almost chewed down the building by five o'clock. He chewed the shoes off my feet under my desk. That day the vice president came into my office about a very important assignment. As he was talking, the dog in hiding was ripping the soles off my shoes and off my feet. I tried to remain still by holding onto my chair, so the VP wouldn't know there was an animal under my desk, eating me alive. And I was increasingly uneasy, because my wastebasket was not in the habit of making chewing-growling sounds. By this time I was shaking from the workout in my lower extremities as the dog gnawed his way down to the bare bone. *My bare bone.* The man began to notice my shaking state and chair-holding-onto condition as if a six-degree tremor had just registered on the Richter scale. But my bluff was not successful because the man left in a huff growling, "When your seizure is over, call me!"

This particular dog creature I had to take home in a cab for fear he'd chew the tires off the bus. He was the chewingest dog ever created. He should have been a cow or a goat—or been fed chewing tobacco instead of dog food. Even his ears were dog-eared from chewing on them. Like my other strays, I had to leave him alone all day while I went to work until I found him a home. When I returned the first evening, he was sitting in my plastic yellow dishpan in the middle of the kitchen floor. He had chewed off the rim until it looked like a serrated crust on a fancy lemon pie. And he was in the midst of devouring my aquarium fish booklet entitled, *Enjoy Your Gouramis and Other Anabantids.*

Sighted Sub . . . Sank Same

The previous episode reminds me of another story. The time my sister-in-law, Betty Ann, was teaching her class about mother love in nature with guppies in the schoolroom fish tank. That is until one day the mother guppy ate the baby guppies! And so another substitute teacher fell up the down staircase.

But getting back to the filet of dog. That night he disappeared. He was determined not to have a master. But he wasn't gone long when I heard the loudspeaker from the nearby baseball field blare forth a frantic plea for "Somebody to get that dog off the field!" Oh, no! It's not him? I hurried down to the ballgame and there he was. The most dog-faced dog with the most dog-faced face. Chasing and chewing on the players. I had to run all over the field with the police to catch him . . . amid the laughter and cheers of the crowd.

They say in taming the animals, man tamed himself, becoming herdsman and farmer. So I found him a home on a farm. I suppose he's chewed up all the crops by now. And even chewed down the barn. I know he ate *me* out of house and home. He ate my house and home.

The next stray that came my way I gave to an elderly couple in a third floor apartment. He was a cute little puppy. I thought he was a toy breed. Months later I saw the couple and inquired, "Well, how's the little toy dog?" The man barked, "Toy! Hell! He grew up to be a Great Dane! When he wags his tail in the living room, he knocks the dishes off the kitchen table." I sighed, "Oh, dear!" What else could one say? Maybe "Oh, my!" . . . at the thought of a Great Dane in a three-room third-floor apartment.

*(P.S.—Sambo, I'm Only Kidding!
You're My Valentine, Yes, Mine!)*

My neighbor's dog grew up to be a Labrador retriever. And he started retrieving everything within a vicinity of a thousand miles—including Labrador. While he grew up from Little Black Sambo to Big Black Sambo, he retrieved the universe. He even retrieved a retriever! He must have been a frustrated rummage sale chairman.

Anything he found in the neighborhood that was unchained . . . unclaimed . . . or unframed, he would dog-trot over to my doorstep. Now, I didn't mind the workman's lunch pail with the Limburger garlic sandwich . . . or the leaky hot water bottle . . . or the Apache headpiece. But I did mind the cannon shell. That was "carrying" things a little too far. For some strange reason, I didn't like cannon shells lying around my yard. Although my property is no thing of beauty, I do try to keep it from looking like Bull Run.

So as a plea for help to the United Nations and Vatican Councils IV, V, VI, and VII regarding my underdeveloped front-backyard and my overdeveloped dog-next-door—my human rights versus canine rights—I penned the following poem:

THE DOG—MY NEIGHBOR

*Now he's not mine but I am his
And that's the way it 'tis, it 'tis;*

*Some pedigree and pedagogue
Must state he's just as much MY dog;
Thru rain and snow and smog and fog
Like mailman—here he comes agog!*

*He thinks my yard is his to hog
And thru my daffodils he'll jog;
He treats my lawn like one big bog
To search out every log and frog;
His ecumenical dialogue
I'd rather make this dogalogue:*

*Would someone do the best of favors
And tell him he's not mine . . . my neighbor's!*

He Was the Pointer, I Was the Pointee

Sambo was my neighbor on one side. Now on the other side was Bill, an English pointer. He never pointed at birds or anything he was supposed to, being a hunting dog. He only pointed at human beings. His favorite few. He was a people pointer. Yes, he was the pointer. And I was the pointee.

How he knew when it was time for me to come home from work at night, I couldn't figure out. Unless he could tell by that calendar watch he wore. He was always up at the corner waiting for my bus. That is, unless there was a cat around. Then he was hiding someplace. Whenever a cat even looked at him, he'd scream at the top of his lungs—to the great bewilderment of the entire cat population of the United States. The cats also were baffled by his love of milk. He followed the milkman around and then helped himself to the cartons left on the doorsteps. Chewed the top off, held the carton between his big paws, and drank away. But that was nothing to his kiss of the hops . . . to what he could do to bottles of beer. He was the dog that made Milwaukee famous. He crashed every neighborhood party for "The Beer Barrel Polka" and "Little Brown Jug I Love Thee." When he foamed at the mouth, nobody took him seriously.

Whenever he came over, he never barked or scratched to get in. He simply knocked at the door. One Thanksgiving night when he came in, he grabbed the remains of my turkey off the kitchen table and ran up the street with it. That's as near as he ever got to being a hunting dog. That's "my Bill." But who cares! As long as he's a most happy fella.

But getting back to his pointing, Bill's people-pointing was nothing compared to his bee-pointing, for which he rated

a bee-plus! Their buzzing noise must have annoyed him. Then beyond that "point" . . . it was bee-ware, both for the prey and the prey-er, as Bill made a bee-line for the buzzers. He scared them so much that he became the only thing in medical science that ever gave the bees hives! And surely he must have been the inspiration for Jack Benny's playing of "The Flight of the Bumble Bee" for thirty-nine years.

Bill didn't seem to care that the gods of ancient mythology were nourished by the honey of bees. And even the great philosophers, Plato and Sophocles, as infants, were supposed to have had honey placed on their lips by bees, symbolizing the honeyed words of philosophy that later would flow from their mouths. Mohammed recognized the strange connection of bees to the soul and supposedly admitted them to heaven. And the Greeks consecrated bees to the moon. And wasn't the bee the symbol of no less than the great Napoleon? And another great, the Roman Marcus Aurelius, remarked in the Forum, "What is not good for the swarm is not good for the bee." So way back, 2,000 years ago, men must have foreseen Bill, the English pointer of the twentieth century.

This great dog is an old dog now and his life is no longer a beehive of activity. Instead he sleeps in the sun most of the day . . . quiet and still. So when he's called soon by the Great Beekeeper, we're sure, because of his tremendous qualities, he'll get time off for good bee-havior.

Pug of My Heart . . . I Love You

Another four-legged neighbor is a charming little Pug dog named Dukey. His mother was Lady Bug and his father was Casey's Pug of My Heart. Dukey resembles a small bulldog with a delightful, worried, wrinkled little face and two big banjo eyes like Eddie Cantor. We've often begged him to sing us a chorus of "Ida," sweet as you know what, or "If You Knew Susie . . .", but he won't sing them. He'll only whistle them. Pugs, incidentally, came to England through Holland with traders of the Dutch East India Company from the Orient.

Dukey loves to walk around with something hanging out of his mouth—a fresh string bean, a toothpick, and especially a flower. He's the canine Carmen. He also loves to chew on a doggie Yummie stick, which makes him look like the caricatures of Churchill smoking a cigar. In fact, Winston Churchill was submitted as his alternate name on his registration to the American Kennel Club. So if Dukey lasts another thousand years, we'll all agree this was his finest hour . . . when he whistled "If You Knew Susie."

While we're on the subject of names, I agree with the writer/columnist, Westbrook Pegler: "For the fifth year in succession I have pored over the catalogue of dogs in the show at Madison Square Garden without finding a dog named Rover, Towser, Sport, Spot, or Fido. Who is the man who can call from his back door at night: 'Here, Champion Alexander of Clane o' Wind-Holme!'"

* * *

Other dogs who have been my best friends include Danny, Shorty, Littlebit, Muffin, Taffy, Loki, Bones, Lady, Pokey,

Rasputin, Diogenes, Napoleon, Agamemnon, Cheops, Homer, Hannibal, Nebuchadnezzar, Lorna Doone III, John Jones, Jr., and a cast of thousands.

* * *

HOW DID YOU GET YOUR DOG?

*Did you find him one Christmas there under the tree?
Or on a road by a sign reading, "Get puppies free."*

*Or maybe a kennel with all of the trimmings
Or a dog pound with strays and filled up to the
brimmings?*

*Did she follow the children from school one cold day
And so then she decided to move in and stay?*

*Did the "Lady" next door to you have some more
puppies*

And you picked one out then to add to your guppies?

*Or a little dog lost and so filled with such fright,
You said you'd take him in but "now just for tonight!"*

*Did he come for a birthday from Grandmaw and
Grandpaw?*

They thought it sure beat that "haw-haw" with a claw!

*Was she left in a will by a friend so well-meaning
To take for her walks in the twilight's last gleaning?*

*Did you enter a contest and win the grand prize
Of a Great Dane for life then to go exercise!?*

*Did your cousin go 'way on a long business trip
And forget to come back for the mailman's best nip?*

*Or your cousin who left on a two-week vacation
But left a life-time supply of the dog's Ken-l-ration?*

*Yes, no matter, no matter how you got your dog—
Just be grateful it wasn't a frog or a hog!*

Sammy Stunning and Noah in the Ark Amid Oodles of Poodles

Sammy is also one of my pet neighbors. He's a small woolly sheep dog. The first summer he got clipped, he came over to show off his haircut. At first I couldn't figure out what he was trying to do. He kept turning around like a model in a style show. Finally I realized he was showing off his first haircut. He was really "Sammy Stunning," we all told him. Then he kept looking and blinking as if trying to say something else. Soon it dawned on me that he was showing off his eyes. This was the first time his eyes were free from the hair hanging over them. He wanted everybody to notice that he could see and that we could see his eyes. So as his reward I sang him a song, a Sammy song: "When they ask me to recall the biggest thrill of all, I'll tell them I remember Sammy's eyes."

Three other little doggie donuts in the neighborhood are Fritz, Noah, and Tippy. Fritz's real name is Senōr Fritz, so-called by his owners because he's half Mexican Chihuahua and half German dachshund. One ear even stands up like a Chihuahua and the other hangs down like a dachshund. Noah is a tiny white poodle and his name suits him perfectly. He has an Old Testament face that belongs in the drawing of the animals boarding the ark—he's the one staring at the "camera." That's Noah. Tippy is another small white poodle. When he runs along in his yard behind the low hedge, you can just see the top of his head and tip of his tail; so it looks as if two fuzzy white pompoms are magically moving horizontally through the air in inner space. When Tippy gets mad, he sits in the corner facing the wall or at the door and won't look at anybody, which is his punishment for the human race.

It doesn't set mankind back for centuries and cause the loss of the Garden of Eden. But it does leave you never quite the same, anthropologically speaking . . . even Margaret Mead would admit that.

In the poodle parlor, of course, there has to be a brown poodle. She's my friend's dog, Co-Co. Or rather Mam'selle Co-Co. The Gigi of the dog world. What Maurice Chevalier couldn't have done singing to her: "You've been growing up before my eyes. . . . What miracle has made you the way you are?" Even Maxim's is none too good for her tastes. Very, very feminine and chic. And loves to be complimented on her appearance after a grooming. But, nevertheless, she comes down to earth and comes running whenever she hears the refrigerator door being opened.

Like all dogs, however, and like all human beings and all creatures in creation, she has that one individual characteristic or habit, unique only to her. She sits for a long time watching the sun's rays on the wall until they reach the floor; then she goes over and curls up in the warm fulfillment of her long vigil and long-awaited dreams.

Look for the Silver Lining . . .

. . . whenever a cloud appears in the sky. This surely could be the theme song for my friend's dog—because this little silver poodle named Silver would brighten anybody's life. Sitting in the window waiting for the children to come home from school every day—no matter how long; jumping in the car to go with the family for every ride—no matter where; chewing on all the socks—no matter how new or old; running ahead on a walk in the woods and getting "lost," only to turn up playing hide-and-seek behind the trees—no matter how tired; waiting for the laundry to come out of the dryer and curling up on the warm clean soft clothes—no matter who cares. But no matter what, you can be sure that whenever he's around, with his little silver-tongued bark, his little silver-screen personality, and his little Silver-Star courage, he makes the world look all silver . . . and gold.

King Kong Is Ping-Pong

While on the subject of poodles, my cousin has the poodle to end all poodles. He's the doggonedest, biggest animal of his breed. A truly wonderful creature. He's called a standard. But if he's standard, then King Kong is Ping-Pong . . . a vest pocket edition. He looks like somebody dressed in a dog costume . . . as if any minute he's going to say, "Guess who?"—or he's going to take off his coat and sit around in his bones. His name is no less than his stature. Thornecroft's Reginald, which sounds like a character from a Jackie Gleason skit. And he looks the part. But no dog-fancier could have a dog fancier than Reggie. Wait 'til you hear the other names in his family tree, which goes back four generations on his pedigree papers: Tuxedo's Andre of Thornecroft, Tangerine de La Fontaine, Rondelay Honey Bun, Towhey's Bing Bang, Hornpipe Congo, Hornpipe Oliver Twist, Hornpipe Carioca, Caledonia Brown Betty, Forest Buster Brown, Puttencove Minuteman, Astron Lily of Puttencove, and (believe it or not!) Rude Awakening! Which all confirms that he's really a thoroughbred. But a horse, not a dog!

Poodles originated in Germany and were brought to France, which more often is credited for their nationality. And they were clipped, not for show, even though many were circus dogs, but for easier swimming in hunting and retrieving. This clipping also prevented their hair from becoming matted when wet. They've been depicted in paintings by great artists, including Goya and Durer, and have been mentioned in literature. Reggie, my cousin's poodle, was even in *A Visit from Saint Nicholas*!

One Christmas, some monks from a nearby monastery

gave my cousin's family several loaves of the monks' well-known homemade Christmas bread. This much-coveted, beautifully wrapped fruit bread was placed among the other gifts under the tree Christmas eve. You know what happened!

*'Twas the night before Christmas and all through
the house*

One creature was stirring and it wasn't a mouse . . .

*The fruit bread was placed 'neath the bright tree
with care*

*In hopes that Saint Reginald would leave it
right there . . .*

*When what to the dog's wondering eyes did appear
But the two loaves of bread and nobody near . . .*

*He spoke not a word but went straight to his work,
To miss such a chance he'd sure be a jerk . . .*

*Away to the tree he flew like a flash,
Tore open the bread and made of it hash . . .*

*But when they awoke nobody got edgy,
Sure as Christmas they knew 'twas no burglar . . .
just Reggie!*

But Reggie even topped this. During the holidays my cousin was entertaining guests one evening when Reggie entered the house with a king-size "unmentionable," about a 48-Z, draped over his shoulders like two inflated water wings. Nobody to this day can figure out where in the world he got it. But that was only the beginning of the evening. Later when a buffet supper was served, Reggie crawled unnoticed under the table, for the long tablecloth reached to the floor. Suddenly the table, filled with china and food, started to move seancelike to the other side of the room. Come in, Spirit! Are you there, Reggie?!

All He Needed Was a Little Nudge

The love of animals in our family dates back even to our great-grandfathers. One was Michael Burns. He came to Kentucky from Kilkenny, Ireland. He looked like an Erin snowman who just got off the boat. His friends included Covington postmaster Jesse Grant, Ulysses's father; also statesman John G. Carlisle; and naturalist Daniel Carter Beard. As a representative of Kentucky he attended Lincoln's funeral as it passed through at Indianapolis, carrying flowers from his own backyard here. A real fighting Irishman, he fought for every cause from the abolition of slavery to playing baseball on Sunday to getting our little town incorporated as a city into the state of Kentucky.

Our great-grandfather raised and pastured horses, including those of many of the well-to-do of Cincinnati across the Ohio River from Kentucky—the Longworths, Pogues, Tafts. And Shillito's big department store would trust only him with their great Palominos. He also ran a small race track, at which he staged the still-talked-about Indian buffalo hunt with none other than P. T. Barnum himself. But that's another story.

Everywhere our great-grandfather went he was followed by his Newfoundland dog, which looked like a good-natured shaggy black bear. This breed of dog was developed in Newfoundland from dogs brought there by European fishermen. The breed was especially trained to save men from drowning. With the breed's natural protective instinct, the dog had a habit of constantly giving our great-grandfather an affectionate nudge—which, by the way, from a large Newfoundland is like a shove over a cliff. So the big dog was almost knocking him

down with affection. There was nothing left for Michael Burns to do but name him "Nudge."

In making their rounds around the town, the elderly gentleman always stopped in the confectionery and bought the dog a bag of "marble" fudge, as he called it, probably because he was from Kilkenny—the great marble country. The proprietor would try to sneak broken pieces, which no other customers wanted, into the bag for the dog. So wise to the trick, Michael Burns would demand the perfect pieces—"I don't want nary a smudge on the fudge for Nudge!"

In a Lamplight Gone with the Wind

Our Great-grandfather Farrell was just the opposite type of personality from our Great-grandfather Burns. He was a tall, thin, quiet Irishman. If there ever were such a thing! He had come from County Meath, Ireland, near Tara, for which Scarlet O'Hara's family plantation was named in *Gone with the Wind*. Of great historical importance, Tara in Meath was the seat of the ancient Irish pagan kings, where Saint Patrick lit the fire of Christianity and converted them. The spot also is remembered for Thomas Moore's beautiful poem, *The Harp That Once Through Tara's Halls*.

A great reader, our Great-grandfather Farrell is best remembered sitting in a rocking chair with a fuzzy little dog on his lap and a book propped open on the dog's head. Every time he came across a quotation about a dog, he'd read it to his dog. "A dog starved at his master's gate. . . . Predicts the ruin of the state." That was his favorite from William Blake's *Proverbs*. Another was Elizabeth Barrett Browning's tribute to her dog: "With my hand upon his head. . . . Is my benediction said."

Then when it started to get dark, accompanied by his little dog he would make the rounds with the old lamplighter as the man climbed up his ladder, trimmed the wicks, cleaned the smokey chimneys, and lit the lamps. All the while our Great-grandfather Farrell commented on the weather in his Irish brogue and typical Irish way. "'Tis a soft night . . . 'Tis a beautylike evening . . . 'Tis a star-blessed time . . .'" The neighborhood said it was an unforgettable sight with the snow falling on him and the little dog and the lamplighter, like a scene on an old-fashioned Christmas card, adding

brightness to the long, lonely darkness. But when the moon was full, the lamps weren't lit. Then Great-grandfather Farrell would look up at the full white moon, shining like heaven's spotlight on the black curtain of night, and say to his dog, "Guess we won't light the lamps tonight. God lit His."

“Nothing to Watch but the Road” . . . and the Babes in Toyland

We used to live in the great city of Chicago in a great era—the Roaring Twenties during the heyday of Al Capone, Knute Rockne, and broadcasting. Our father was production manager of Majestic Radio Corporation. Driving around the big city in our big new Reo car was one of the highlights of our life there. And our father was always bringing home glorious surprises in it, just as it had been a glorious surprise itself. Every night, just like the first night he came home in it, my brothers—Jim and Jack and Joe—and I waited for him on the street corner. One night we saw him coming down busy Harlem Avenue with something sitting in the front seat. It was a new dog. A young English setter. She was white with black markings so shiny they looked blue. And so her name, “Aragon Blue Lassie.” She had a beautiful, wistful face and looked like a dog that might have been born on a battlefield in France—as was Rin-tin-tin. She had an air about her of some noble, poignant origin, and possessed those qualities of the well-known inscription Lord Byron had placed on the monument of his dog: “. . . beauty without vanity, strength without insolence, courage without ferocity, and all the virtues of man without his vices.”

When our parents took us for a ride in the Reo, my three brothers and I sat in the back seat with the dog. And as children do, before the drive was over, we started a riot. So keeping his left hand on the steering wheel and without looking back, our father would swing his right hand around to quell the free-for-all with one blow. We learned to “duck” the punch, even the dog, and spent the rest of the drive piled in

a heap on the floor with Lassie . . . afraid to rise again for fear that the dust and our father's right hand had not cleared. Our mother said all they could see in the back seat were four pairs of little legs and four paws sticking up in the air. So even with children and a dog, the Reo was living up to its slogan, "Nothing to watch but the road."

One night when we met our father at the corner, the surprise was two white bunnies sitting in the back seat. And another time it was a canary in a cage. Our menagerie was growing at such a rate that it was impossible to keep them all in the house. So he decided to have a small pet house made for the backyard. He told Mother that the made-to-order pet house would be delivered on a certain day. Well, that morning Mother was in the kitchen and saw a small house—the size for people, not pets—coming down the street. She couldn't believe her eyes when it started up our driveway and stopped in our backyard. The towing driver knocked on the door and said, "Sign here, lady." Mother, in a state of disbelief, managed to ask, "Sign for what? What is that monster you've deposited in the backyard?" The driver explained, "That's the pet house ordered by Mr. Kelly." To which Mother moaned, "I believe you."

When my brothers came home from school, they thought it was fantastic and started moving not only the pets but also themselves into the house. "Just a minute!" Mother cautioned. "I have to have a few words with your father about that menagerie mansion." When our father came home, he burst in the front door and eagerly asked, "Did the pet house come?" My brothers shouted, "Oh, boy! Did it! It's great! Wait 'til you see it!" But one look at our mother and our father could surmise that he had pulled a colossal one this time. He gingerly said, "Something tells me all is not well with the pet house." He looked out the back door and ejaculated, "Oh, dear lord!" Mother merely commented, "We could all

move out of this house into that one and make this the animal dwelling." Taking her seriously, the boys agreed, "Yeah, let's make this the pet house and that the people house!" At which everybody burst out laughing. Well, it seems that the carpenters had gotten the order mixed up as in *Babes in Toyland*—one hundred soldiers six feet tall rather than six hundred soldiers one foot tall. Needless to say, early the next morning the house was towed back down the street.

Vanilla Had a Flavor All His Own

A stray dog adopted our grade school as his home in our little Kentucky town. He was black, so the kids named him Vanilla. He played ball with the boys at recess and played tag with the girls. Then when the nun superior rang the bell, he got in line and marched into school with us. He went from classroom to classroom all day listening to the nuns teach. If it were a boring lesson, he took a snooze by the big, old warm radiator. When he started to snore, it "broke up" the class. And Sister would say, "Somebody wake up Vanilla!"

The dog ate his meals at the priest's house. Our pastor was Father Clement Bocklage, a great big bishop of a priest. He was a magnificent speaker, teacher, writer and storyteller, to whom we children loved to listen. When he came over to give us our catechism lesson, he told great stories instead . . . stories of when he was a prison chaplain, of people, of history, of the world. He had two small Scottie dogs he took for a long hike early every morning in the Kentucky hills before he said the six o'clock mass. To see the big priest in old hiking clothes coming out of the hills in the dim light of morning with the two little Scotties was an unforgettable sight. He always said that this was really his first "mass" every day—his walk with his dogs in the beautiful dawn-hushed hills. He closed everyone of our religion lessons with a Latin quotation, "Remember, children, *caput hominum et angelorum*—God is the head of men and angels." Then he would add, "and animals!" as Vanilla started to snore by the warm radiator.

The most famous Scottie in history was President Roosevelt's dog, Fala. Many stories have been told about their



SILVER

"Look for the silver lining. . . ."



CO-CO
The Gigi of
the dog world



REGGIE

No seance is complete without him
("Come in, Spirit!")



My Great-grandfather Farrell with his dog—"In a lamplight gone with the wind."



QUEENIE

She didn't laugh at the yolks when she received her first egg shampoo.

SAMBO

My neighbor, my valentine



BILL

He was the pointer, I was the pointee.

association, but probably the favorite is the one when plans were being made for the inauguration. FDR was told who would ride in the limousine seat beside him. "But," he protested, "that seat's already taken." Puzzled, his staff asked, "Who is going to sit there, Mr. President?" And FDR emphatically replied, "Fala, of course!"

And who could ever forget the news photo of little Fala sitting alone by Franklin Roosevelt's empty wheelchair after the President died.

And there was also Greyfriar's Bobby, the little Scottie who, after his master died, became an honorary citizen of Edinburgh, Scotland, and even was given a state funeral complete with bagpipes!

We Were Too Doggone Soon

One dog we had as children was a little Pekingese named Ginger. Pekingese originally came from China and were sacred animals, bred only for nobility. In fact, only the white-faced Pekingese like Ginger were permitted in the emperor's court. The theft of one of these royal dogs was a serious crime, punishable by death. Yet the British took the chance when they broke into the palace in 1860. But Ginger didn't care about her royal background. All she cared about was a vegetable plate. And she was very fussy about it. Didn't want the peas touching the potatoes, nor the string beans touching the peas, nor the potatoes touching the peas or the string beans.

She loved to be carried around on a pillow like an oriental princess. So we obliged as children and took her everywhere in the house on her little throne. We sat her and her pillow on the table as we did our lessons. Even took her down to the basement when we had to fire the old coal furnace. And up to the attic one night to watch for Haley's Comet. We placed her on her pillow behind our ten-cent store telescope by the window in the dark attic for the grand all-night dog watch. We had a child's idea that it would be great for her to have the distinction of being the first little doggie to see Haley's Comet through a telescope—or even the Dog Star. But none of us saw the comet. Because we had the wrong night. We were forty-nine years too soon. Or twenty-six years too late. The comet wasn't due back again in its seventy-five year cycle until 1986. Which made us very sad because then our little Peke wouldn't be here to see it. But, on the other hand, we thought, then she might be riding it! Just like the pictures of the ancient carved Peke dog idols in ivory and pre-

cious metals and jewels. In fact, Pekingese even were thought to be little gods themselves, like the sun god, and were called sun dogs because of the coloring of their coats. They also were called sleeve dogs because they were carried in the flowing sleeves of the imperial royal robes. So we always tucked her in the sleeve of an old bathrobe to sleep and dream she was a princess. We surely thought she was.

Queenie Didn't Laugh at the Yolks

The *Guinness Book of World Records* does not show that our family birddog, Queenie, was the involuntary recipient of the first egg shampoo in history—invented by our brother Jim when he was only two years old. It happened one day while our mother was busy taking care of our twin brothers, Jack and Joe, as infants. The arrival of the twin babies in the household turned two-year-old Jim out “on his own.” And as any mother knows, a two-year-old on the prowl is worse than the Jesse James Gang. As Jim was roaming loose one day, he spotted the old icebox on the back porch, where they were all located back in the 1920s. He decided to investigate it, spied the eggs inside, and at the same time spied . . .

*Couched in his kennel, like a log,
With paws of silver sleeps the dog.*

—WALTER DE LA MARE, “Silver”

But not for long. One at a time Jim started tossing the eggs at the dog. Splash! A bull's-eye every time! All over the dog's long coat. Sunnyside up. Much to the animal's dismay and Jim's “hooray!” For this invention of the egg shampoo, Queenie got a beautiful coat. And Jim got a beautiful spanking. Sunnyside up.

She's Not Your Dog, Charlie Brown

Anyone who ever owned a beagle or enjoyed Charles Schulz's world-famous "Peanuts" comic strip would appreciate Duchess. She was my brother Jim's dog, the female version of Snoopy. Even though she had won many blue ribbons, she thought a field trial meant that the field was on trial, not her, and ran off to explore it. And true to her hound instincts, she always was going out on the hillside at night howling at the moon, which sent my pediatrician brother in his pajamas out after her before the neighbors started howling, too. And true to her hunting instincts, she was forever wandering away, getting lost. She thought she was a great eagle beagle, like Snoopy after the Red Baron, or a daredevil, Evel Knievel beagle. People from foreign countries were forever calling up, saying, "Your dog is here."

Even the lost continent of Atlantis once called . . . but that even wasn't as alarming as when the dog pound called one day. So the family all went to claim her in a great Stanley-Livingstone meeting scene. And she came home with great fanfare like a grand Duchess. "Return Victorious" from *Aida* should have been played as she came into the house, wagging her tail with her eyes *closed* but staring at everybody. Did you ever have anybody stare at you with their eyes closed? If you've ever had a beagle, you've had it happen. And it's enough to put you in a trance for life. Nevertheless, in spite of the howling at the moon, the getting lost, the eyes-closed hypnosis, and the hound aroma of the great outdoors, and the other legal regal eagle beagle-ings—

This prayer at least the gods fulfill:

*That when I pass the flood and see
Old Charon by the Stygian coast*

*Take toll of all the shades who land
Your little, faithful, barking ghost*

May leap to lick my phantom hand.

—ST. JOHN LUCAS, "My Dog"

Gone with the Rhett

My brother Jim's home now houses eight children, 289 socks without mates, and a preschool Irish setter. A real song-and-dance man. The children named him Rhett after the dashing hero, Rhett Butler, in *Gone with the Wind*. And he, too, is a dashing hero. The last time we saw him he was dashing up the hill wearing one of the little girl's ballerina skirts and waving a flag in his mouth.

*On the green banks of Shannon, when Sheelah was
nigh,*

No blithe Irish lad was so happy as I.

—THOMAS CAMPBELL, "The Harper"

Rhett, the jet, the rust streak flying over the countryside, has the interesting hobby of shoplifting from neighborhood doorsteps and piling all the loot in his own front yard. Door-mats, scatter rugs, newspapers, blooming flower pots, garden tools, bird feeders, and holiday door decorations from pumpkins to pine cones. Then the children have to put it all in a wagon and go around house to house and find out who is missing what and what is missing whom. This hoofer-woofer also has the habit of sitting on the edge of the bed panting and smiling at you while you try to sleep. Did you ever try to sleep with somebody panting and smiling at you? This is most disconcerting, unless you are another Irish setter. Even then, it's a drooling experience.

(Our friends, the Donovan family, have always had a dog. Their current master is also an Irish setter. He's named Sligo after their ancestral county in Ireland. Sligo's noble head and thoughtful, yet whimsical, face reminds everybody of the churchmen depicted in well-meaning cartoons in religious

magazines and newspapers. He even barks in dog Latin. So in the canine world he must be one of the hierarchy assigned to work on each weighty dog-ma.)

This was all my sister-in-law, Virginia, needed . . . a rollicking Irish setter added to her eight children. One of whom, incidentally, once casually commented, "You should never have been a mother." And another added nonchalantly, "We don't like your cooking, either." All this with their father, my brother, away on a restful fishing trip sending home a card from the northwoods with a big moose on it and the message, "Children, obey your mother. Love, Dad."

All of this was bound to lead to some glorious climax some day. Which it did. Suddenly one sunny summer morn a policeman's voice out of the blue and over a megaphone called out, "Mrs. Kelly, will you please come out of the house!" My sister-in-law couldn't believe her ears, as she filled the clothes dryer for the thirty-second time that morning. Could the voice be coming over the radio? No. Then it came again. Could it be coming out of the clothes dryer? Like a TV commercial! No. Then it came again. It must be coming out of a policeman. She looked through the window and there was a cop with a megaphone standing by his car down the street, talking to one of the neighbors, the subdivision crab, who was complaining constantly about the children and the Irish setter running through the yard . . . and had called the police. But the rookie cop, rather than knock on the door with the neighbor's complaint, summoned my sister-in-law by police megaphone out of the house as if she were holed up in a gangster hideout . . . surrounded by the law. The children and the dog in the house, hiding from the neighbor, rose to the occasion and ran to the windows with toy machine guns . . . rat-tat-tating in the direction of the policeman. And the Irish setter went bounding out to run off with the megaphone!

This is now listed in the U.S. Government HEW report on why mothers leave home.

Did His Mother Come from Ireland? Her Picture's in the Dublin Post Office

Another bark-a-lark Irish setter acquaintance was Duffy, my other sister-in-law's family dog. We went to college together. Not the dog, but my sister-in-law, Jeanne, and myself. When Duffy would see us walking into the yard, he would come bounding over the lawn and make no attempt to stop. So we had to fall flat on the grass as he went flying through the air with the greatest of ease right over us. He reminded me of a story I heard in Ireland about Irish wolfhounds. They never bark. They never bite. They just knock you down and stand on you. One day some chicken thieves got into an Irishman's barn. So he called his two wolfhounds after them. The dogs very efficiently knocked down the thieves and stood on them. But when the police arrived, the dogs got off the thieves, letting them escape, and knocked down the police and stood on them. But, seriously, these great animals are recorded back to the third century in Greece and Rome and Ireland. Battles even were fought over them. One Irishman wouldn't trade several thousand head of livestock for his hound.

But back to Duffy. One night another college classmate and I went to Jeanne's house to spend the weekend. The other girl couldn't see a thing without her glasses. So when she had taken them off to go to bed, we slipped the Irish setter into the other twin bed and covered him up with his head on the pillow. The girl started a conversation with him, thinking it was I in the other bed. He went along with the gag for a while, answering her in grunts. But soon he got tired of the game and suddenly bolted from the bed with the sheet completely over him. Like a ghostly apparition he dashed through the

dark room letting out the howlingest howl . . . the return of the hound of the Baskervilles racing over the English moors in the dead of night. I wonder whatever happened to that girl.

* * *

WHAT KIND OF DOG DO YOU HAVE?

Is she a cocker?

So spoiled you have to rock'er

I bet she's a shepherd and German,

Rin-tin-tin or Herman.

Of course, he's a beagle

And thinks he's an eagle!

Or maybe a setter,

Irish or English, you'd never forget her.

I once had a Pekingese,

All she did was peak and sneeze.

And my neighbor had a Pug,

What an ugly mug, but you still want to hug.

I love a pointer,

Never a dispointer, even a disjointer.

Or give me a retriever

Who'll even retrieve a retriever!

We once had a poodle,

Who liked to chew on a noodle.

My uncle's chow

Wants his chow . . . now . . . or wow!

My Aunt Clara claimed she had a Dalmatian,

We didn't tell her it was really Alsatian.

*Is your dog a holy terrier,
Welsh, Yorkshire, or even hairier?
Or is it a hound—wolf, fox, or basset,
Or just plain middle classet?
Have you ever had a toy breed
That's fully, fully pedigreed?
Be careful not to over feed
And, heavens, don't wind up full speed!
Or is your dog part husky?
And his coat a little dusky?
I once had a collie, named her Lassie too,
And, by golly, she was classy too. And sassy too!
Did you ever have a Saint Bernard
And try to keep him in a yard?
My cousin has a great big boxer,
Off Muhammad Ali he could knock the sockser!
So I guess it doesn't matter
What kind of dog you hve—acrobater,
Aristocrater, democrater, plutocrater, bureaucrater,
Up-and-at-er, dis-and-datter, pit-o-patter . . .
As long as it's no pussycatter!*

He's Not Wanted by the Police

One of the canine thespians in our family was my brother Joe's family dog, Glen. He was an army career man. Both the dog and my brother. But Glen outranked Joe. So my brother had to salute his dog. Their last tour of duty was Korea. When the dog was taken to the airport to be shipped overseas, the man at the ticket counter said, "That'll be two hundred dollars, please." To which one of the children replied, "But we only paid two dollars for him at the dog pound." Recently he was shipped back from Korea with their two parakeets. Glen arrived with the big container of parakeet seed in a "Granny Goose Dip Chip" can. But the parakeets haven't arrived yet. They're still flying around over the Pacific some place . . . with the cans of dog food.

When Joe was stationed at the University of Virginia in the Judge Advocate General Army Law School, the city of Charlottesville had very strict laws on letting dogs run loose. But Glen would invariably sneak out—only to return sitting in the back seat of a police car, looking like the cartoon character, Marmaduke. The children would come running into the house shouting, "Here's Glen again in the police car!" At which warning everybody would hide, too embarrassed to claim their acquaintance. When the police came to the door, Glen stayed in the back seat looking straight ahead as if he didn't know his own family or home. All he needed was a derby and a white carnation to be mistaken for a big-city political boss going for a free ride in the police car. We finally concluded that he sneaked out of the house because he liked to ride in the police car. But the police were not as thrilled with his company as he was with theirs.

To add to the confusion, our mother was always getting the dog's name confused with the names of Joe's six little boys. So she would send him "Happy Birthday, Grandson" cards and would ask strange questions about him by mail: "Did Glen get over the measles?" . . . "How does Glen like kindergarten?" . . . "What size shoes does Glen wear?" But her classic comment was, "Glen looks more like Joe every day."

She's Always Pulling Out the "Drawers"

The family gallery of doggerels also includes Heidi, the miniature dachshund of my darling niece, Mary. Many experts believe that dachshunds date back to the long-bodied, short-legged dogs of the ancient Egyptian drawings; but others think the breed is of German origin, specially bred long and low to hunt under brush and into tunnels. There's one town in Germany that raises so many dachshunds they outnumber the people. How did this little Wiener schnitzel get in our Irish family with such ancestral names on her pedigree as Otto Von Kinnimeyer, Gescheit Herr Klein, and Von Eik's Alheim?!

Heidi is the sweater girl of her neighborhood. She loves to show off her doggie sweaters, but is getting so fat she looks like Humpty-Dumpty in them rather than Twiggy. Yes, Heidi is in great shape, but we can't say the same for the family underwear. And Heidi is the underlying cause of the underwear catastrophe. She has a habit of stealing everybody's skivvies, which is reducing the family to its bare bodkin! She's quick on the draw on "drawers"—leaving the boys short on shorts and the girls singing: "I see London, I see France, I see Heidi with somebody's underpants!" One time when I stayed overnight I dreamed I saw Heidi with my Maidenform

...

Yes, Heidi is always going underground with the underwear. There's no lingering lingerie anywhere in the house. Heidi is off with it! No girdle is too big a hurdle. And no petticoat is too petty for her petty larceny. She'll slip up on any slip. In fact, when the six children are racing through the house getting ready for school in the morning, it really

looks like petticoat junction as Heidi races with them, dragging off sundries of undies.

She's the canine version of "Dennis the Menace." She should have been called "Denise the Chemise." Why doesn't she ever steal anything but underwear? Why doesn't she ever purloin a sirloin? Sack a sock? Bag a bag? Lift a shift? Loot a boot? Nab a crab? Hook a crook? Poach an egg? Snare a pear? Take a rake? Snatch a latch? Hijack a flapjack? Fleece a sheep? No, not Heidi. She prefers to remain the bloomer girl. When day is done the little four-legged sausage collapses in her dog bed like a tired corset saleslady punching out on the time clock.

To break her of this underwear stealing habit, we thought about sending her to dog obedience school; but we couldn't find one which offers a B.V.D. degree.

Even at the End of the Rain-“Bo” . . . a Dog!

One evening after a summer storm, I was looking out the window at a beautiful rainbow. Suddenly something began to stir under the rain-soaked bushes in the backyard. From a distance it looked like somebody sleeping there in long white underwear . . . in a hobo jungle! Or maybe a ghost! Or even “Big Foot” itself, the mysterious wild man of the West hunted for years in the woods and wilds. Or could it be the “Abominable Snowman!?” And in my backyard!? The craggy creature tracked by trappers and historians in the Himalayan Mountains for decades. I’ll be famous for capturing the Yeti single-handedly . . . in Kentucky at that! We’ll be on and in *National Geographic*!

Then the figure stirred again and stuck his sleepy soaked head out of the dripping bushes. It wasn’t an underwear commercial, or a hobo, or a ghost, or “Big Foot,” or even “Little Foot,” or a snowman. Whatever it was, it had the head of a dog. How incredible! Maybe a snowman with the head of a dog. Like the sphinx with the body of a lion and the face of a woman. But then he lumbered forward and turned out to be all dog. You might know. Was my life to become one shaggy dog story after another? He was a big, beautiful, white English hunting dog. But he was worn and weak and afraid. Yet he did wag his tail. As Josh Billings once said, “There’s only one thing in the world that money can’t buy. And that’s the wag of a dog’s tail.”

He wouldn’t let me come near him. But finally after eating and resting for a few days, he let me pet him and look at the name plate on his collar. It said his name was “Bo” with an address in Tipton, Georgia! How did this poor creature get

six hundred miles from home? I called his owner long distance who said the dog had been lost on a hunting trip down there six months before. What had happened to him? Where had he been? How had he come this far? But at last his long hard odyssey was over. Did that supreme sixth sense of animals bring him to the right backyard? The day I took him to the airport, he looked at me with that dog-eyed look, as if to say, "I'll never forget you." And I told him likewise, especially I'd never forget the dent he made in my petunia bed under the bushes. Then we put him on the plane, and kept waving good-bye until the plane disappeared on the horizon. We bade him "God speed," and "Bo" flew over the rainbow . . . home.

I Was Sentenced to Twenty Years in the Doghouse!

Of all the dogs who have been our best friends, one took the hoofer-woofer prize. Our incredible, indestructible, indescribable Peppy. That's short for Pepper. And long for Pep. Because our little Pekingese had been named Ginger, we decided to stay in the spice family for dog names. But Pepper probably should have been called Cayenne or Oil of Cloves or Bay Leaves or something unusual like that. His mother was an Australian terrier and his father was wanted by the FBI.

One cold winter day our brother Joe bought him from a man selling an orphaned litter of puppies on the street, and brought the little tyke home in his overcoat pocket. When I came in that evening, Mother exclaimed, "Wait 'til you see what's in the kitchen!" There he was. A little ball of pepper-colored fur sound asleep upside down in an improvised cigar-box bed. One look and I became his prisoner for twenty years. Without parole. Or time off for good behavior. Mine, not his.

When we were about to go to bed that night, every dog owner in the world would sympathize with what happened. Like just bringing home a new baby from the hospital. I adopted the firm stand that he was not going to sleep in my bedroom as all our other dogs had wound up doing. With the determination of a Prussian general, I issued the command that he would be trained never to go beyond the kitchen day or night. With military precision I fixed him a bed in a bushel basket and all the things recommended in the dog books, so a new owner doesn't go stark raving mad that first night with a new puppy. A hot-water bottle to replace the warmth of his mother, a clock ticking to sound like her heartbeat, an old

sweater, the light on and a belly full of warm milk. Whoever thought up these things must have had in mind a baby kangaroo or infant orangutan or puppy guppy. Never heard of a dog yet that it worked for.

Everything went just fine until I fell asleep. Then he started. Like the call of the wild. "Hoooooooooooooooooooo!" I could hear Mother laugh in her room. "There's your boy soprano," she sang out. "Now what are you going to do?" I confidently replied, "I'll just give him some more milk." So I did. Returned to another deep sleep. And he started all over again. How such a little creature could muster such a blood-curdling cry, I'll never know. This kept up until the middle of the night—like the chant of the wild man of Borneo. I finally gave in. And when he saw me come into the kitchen bleary-eyed for the fifth time, he knew he had won . . . and greeted me like old war buddies who had been through an historic battle together.

"Come on!" I said. "But just for tonight." Out of pride, I didn't want the rest of the family to know he had won. So I tiptoed upstairs with him in the bushel basket. But in front of Mother's door in the dark he sensed her presence and let out a friendly little "Woof!" At which she heartily laughed, "I know who's going by my door. I was sure you'd win, little rascal. Congratulations!" I staggered on to my bedroom in humiliating defeat with him. And he was there every night after that . . . for twenty years.

Nobody will ever know what it was like having this little kid for a roommate for two decades. This is how a typical night went. At twelve o'clock he would see a four-legged buddy go by the house and bark a midnight greeting to him. At one he would discover the draw cord on the draw draperies and start pulling them back and forth like wild repeated curtain calls in a vaudeville show. At two he would get caught in the venetian blind slats. At three he would decide to investi-

gate the closet and rattle around in there for a while. At four he would climb into the rocking chair and rock around the clock for an hour, continually falling out, a little bag of bones constantly hitting the floor. At five he would remember something he had buried under my pillow, his favorite burial ground, and want it immediately. Buried balls, bones, and cookies I turned over on all night. Once I dreamed I held up a stagecoach. As I said, "Stick 'em up!", I awoke and was holding in my hand, like a drawn gun, Peppy's buried T-bone from under my pillow.

* * *

Watching this little guy grow up was like living with the "Katzenjammer Kids." He cut his teeth on the rungs of our dining room chairs, changing them from a square shape to a lovely gnawed-on round shape. He used to run off with my fur scarf and hide under the bed with it wrapped around his head, looking like the MGM lion. He wouldn't drink out of his water bowl because it had a color figure of Mickey Mouse in the bottom.

For his shots we took him to Dr. Byron Bernard, one of the members of the distinguished group who transported the goats from the Cincinnati Zoo to Dr. Albert Schweitzer in Africa for the goat milk necessary to feed sick native babies. But Peppy was not impressed with his special veterinarian. Why do our dogs always act like cannibals in the vet's office? Everybody else's animals seem to behave. At least they act sick. When Peppy saw the vet take out the needle for his shot, the little character leaped from the table, plunged through the screen door (and I do mean through), and ran down the street. My brother Jack and I ran after him, yelling, "Come back, little Sheba Peppy!"

We finally decided we had to take this little guy someplace

to run off that terrier energy. So every evening Jack and I took him down to the football field. I stood at one goal post and Jack at the other. We let him run back and forth until he "collapsed" on the fifty yardline—a small bundle of tired dogdom. Then we laid the sleepy fuzzy-wuzzy form on an improvised stretcher and carried him off the field . . . just as they had carried off the ill Knute Rockne.

He Was the Juvenile Delinquent in the Manger

The first Christmas we had Peppy, or he had us, one by one the figures in the crib began mysteriously to disappear. The crime rate in the stable was soaring. Then one night we caught him with the goods on him, sneaking with Saint Joseph under the couch, where he had hidden the rest of his stolen manger. We were horrified to discover that our little Peppy was the Bethlehem kleptomaniac!

And then there was the census taker. Oh, the poor census taker! Peppy ruined the man's report with his droooooooling, drippppppping, doggggggie whiskers after lapping up his morning cocoa . . . with a marshmallow in it, too. Then there was also the vacuum cleaner salesman, the antique collector, the gospel singer, the paperhanger, the meter reader and the rug cleaner—who after a round with Peppy left us with the ancient proverb of the great oriental philosopher, Brian Murphy: "Sayonara means good-bye in Japanese. Cyanide means good-bye in any language."

"Where have we failed," I moaned. "We'll never live to raise him," Mother lamented. But she was absolutely wild about him. And he, her. As a puppy he sat on the end of her long robe when she fixed breakfast and rode across the kitchen floor. One morning he had grown too big for the trip; and when he jumped on, over they went! While reading the morning newspaper, Mother would put him on the paper spread over the kitchen table. Even after he was full grown! The one-way conversation went like this: "Uh, oh! There goes a flea on Dorothy Kilgallen. Now that's not nice, don't wag your tail on Walter Winchell." For some strange reason, Mother commented, it took her all morning to read the paper.

And for the same strange reason, nobody else in the family ever wanted to eat on the kitchen table.

One year our little Kentucky town celebrated its centennial. For the grand occasion we dressed Peppy in a small Confederate jacket and cap. We had no idea what the dog would do when we put it on him—chew it up or run away . . .

*The folks up north won't see me no more
When I get to that Swanee shore . . .*

Or Peppy might even secede from the Union . . .

*Old times there are not forgotten
Look away, look away, look away, Dixie land . . .*

But he came through with flying rebel colors. As the centennial parade, to the strains of "My Old Kentucky Home," passed our old house built by our great-grandfather at the end of the Civil War, the little dog in his Confederate uniform sat on the front porch and watched it like a general reviewing his troops . . .

*The corn top's ripe and the meadow's in the bloom
And the birds make music all the day . . .*

* * *

Peppy like all dogs would often run away. He loved to run to the riverbank to watch the boats go by and to the Southern Railroad to watch the trains go by. Then Mother would send our old family friend and helper, "Colored Jim," out to look for him. What a sight the two of them made coming back down the street . . . with the little dog trailing behind on a rope big enough to bring in a lion. A reproduction of Shake-

spare's masterful scene with Launce and his dog in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. "Here they come!" Mother would exclaim. "Maybe they'll go on by the house!" she would amusingly add. But in they came, with Jim scolding the dog, "Now brother Pepper, you ain't goin' to run away no more!"

When we first got the dog, Jim made the resolution that he wasn't going to have anything to do with Peppy. He didn't approve of the new acquisition. And we never did anything in our family for forty years that Jim did not approve of. "Now what are we goin' to do with this pup?" he frowned. "I ain't goin' to be friends with him. No, ma'am. Not me. When he goes upstairs, I'm goin' downstairs. When he goes up the street, I'm goin' down the street. No, siree. I ain't goin' to be friends with him." But great friends they became. The dog followed the black man everywhere he went all over town. When Mother wasn't sending Jim out to find Peppy, she was sending Peppy out to find Jim.

* * *

Every night at eight o'clock the dog methodically left the house and returned a half hour later. For years we never knew where he went. Finally we decided to follow him and found out that he went faithfully to take a walk with a Southern Railroad engineer, Clyde Jobe, and his dog, Sport. But one stormy night after several hours, Peppy hadn't returned. We called the railroad man's home, but got no answer. Then we called the police, fire department, mayor, and sheriff! But no report or sign of Peppy. Finally at midnight he casually walked up on the porch. Dry as a flea even after the rain. Not a bit perturbed. As if he hadn't been gone for hours in a storm. Later we learned that the Southern engineer had gotten home unusually late that night to find the faithful little dog still waiting for hours on his front porch at midnight to take the nightly walk.

The FBI Was After Peppy on His Father's Side

One day a United States Government investigator knocked on the door. Mother answered it. Stopping right here would be enough.

But continuing with the story, the man declared, "I'd like to inform you that this house is under investigation for harboring unregistered aliens." Mother simply answered, "Yes." Surprised, the investigator asked, "What do you mean 'Yes!'" She said, "I mean I don't doubt it." His surprise increasing, the investigator continued, "What do you mean you don't doubt it?" A typical mother would have said, "There must be some mistake." But typical of our mother she added, "My children are always doing things like that!"

Well, the explanation was that our brother, Jack, was having much of his army reserve unit's mail sent to our house rather than the army post for convenience in handling. And a question came up about the immigration status of one of the members. Mother concluded the conversation with the investigator that the only unregistered alien in our house was our dog. "His mother was an Australian terrier," she laughed. "These little dogs herded the sheep and guarded the Australian gold mines." The government inspector didn't think it was funny. But she thought it was hysterical and told Jack to look over the dog's papers to be sure they were in order so we wouldn't be harboring law-breaking unregistered alien canines . . . which crime was "alien" to Peppy's wildest thoughts. And they were wild.

His Daily Log Went Down with Ship

The first time I went away on vacation and left Peppy, I employed an army of rotating baby-sitters befitting an heir to a throne. Nevertheless, when I returned, both the dog and "this old house," looked as if they were "getting ready to meet the saints." Peppy resembled a wild boar with his hair standing out at weird angles. And he had turned snow white . . . with flea powder. They had sprinkled so much on him, when he wagged his tail great white clouds billowed around him. Draperies were blowing out the windows, birds were flying in the windows, water was running down the stairs, rabbits were running up the stairs, clothespins were in the refrigerator, skeletons were in the closet, bats were in the belfry, goblins were gobbling, ghosts were ghosting, lions were whelping in the streets.

All the notes of instructions I had left hanging around the house mysteriously had exchanged places. So the note reading, "Keep this door shut at all times" was hanging on the door of the unused bird cage rather than on the door of the basement. And the note reading, "Fill once a day" was standing in the turkey roaster rather than by the dog's water bowl. The house and the dog and baby-sitters had aged twenty years in two weeks. And to top it all, these guardians of the home front left a daily log, a literary classic, for one another's information and my inspiration:

Monday, July 3:

9:00 A.M.—I fed Peppy and took him for a walk. He kept barking down the sewer up at the corner.—Jack

12 Noon—Peppy threw up.—Mary

- 4:00 P.M.—I phoned Jim and said to come and check Peppy to see if the dog's sick. But Jim keeps insisting he's a pediatrician and not a veterinarian.—Emma
- 6:00 P.M.—Peppy's okay. He ate a good supper and I took him for a walk with the clotheslines from which I could not detach the clothes pole. Where is his chain? —Jim
- 9:00 P.M.—You'll never guess where I found his chain. Now who took his feeding instructions? And why is he so itchy?—Betty Ann
- 11:00 P.M.—I found Peppy sitting out on the roof. Who took away the window screen? And why am I so itchy? —Jenny

Only in Ludlow, America

One of the events that typifies the character of small town, U.S.A., occurred on a July Fourth holiday weekend. In the middle of the night a rampaging fire roared through a paper bag company two blocks away. It lit up the whole town like the rockets red glare and the bombs bursting in air. The glow against the window panes and the loud excitement of people running to the fire woke me up. Peppy in his old age was sleeping through it all. I tried to wake him to run outside and see what was the matter. At first I thought our house was burning down. He wouldn't wake up so I carried him bleary-eyed into the yard. He still wouldn't wake up when the night air hit him, so I laid him limp on the grass. All the neighbors were out in their night clothes. Burning paper was blowing all over our yard. I grabbed the garden hose and turned it on to protect the home front. But only one drop of water came out. The big fire hoses were using all the water. Nobody knew how far the fire would spread. It was really roaring. I stood Peppy on his feet but he just fell over on the grass back to sleep. Wasn't a bit interested that his hometown might go up in smoke. So far, I had lost one bedroom slipper in the excitement. Besides my slipper the town began to fear for the gas stations. "Peppy, wake up! Wake up!" I kept yelling. Giving up on him, I tried swatting the burning pieces of paper away from the house with a flyswatter. All the men in the town were helping to fight the fire.

Then right in the middle of this incendiary scene, Ludlow's version of Mrs. O'Leary's cow, the fire whistle had the nerve to ring! What next? Not another fire! One of the fire trucks pulled away from the raging paper bag company and clanged

off in the opposite direction. An ammonia truck had just overturned rounding a bend in the other end of town. Ammonia was all over the streets and in the air at one end of town as the paper bag fire roared at the other end just a few blocks away. The police and fire department were afraid that the ammonia fumes might back up in the sewers and into the houses. So a city car went through town with a garbled loudspeaker indistinctly telling the people to "get out of your houses . . . ammonia fumes . . . sewers . . . fire . . ." By this time everybody was thoroughly confused. Some were leaning out their windows shouting at the city car, "Come back here and repeat that last sentence!" . . . "Did it say get out of your houses or stay in your houses?" . . . "Is it an ammonia factory that's burning down?" . . . "Does somebody want some spirits of ammonia?" By this time Peppy had really konked out in the damp grass and in the cool night air mingled with ammonia fumes and burning paper smoke.

The next morning when everybody had just gotten back to sleep after a hot night on the town, the city car came through again, this time announcing, "There will be no Fourth of July parade today. Everybody's too tired." So then and there I realized that the town would never have a state funeral for Peppy like Edinburgh, Scotland, did for Greyfriar's Bobby. The town would be too tired.

A Little Dog for All Reasons

When we had a new furnace installed, Peppy's fuzzy little head seemed to be looking down every radiator hole in the floor at the furnace men. "How many of those fuzzy little dogs are there in this house?" one man asked the other. Yes, Peppy seemed to be everywhere and everything those twenty years. A little dog for all seasons . . . and all reasons. And Mother would seasonably say to him, "If you're a good boy and don't bite the mailman, you can be Rudolf this Christmas" . . . "You don't get to play the Easter bunny this year because you ran away twice last week" . . . "If you knock over Mrs. Stump's blooming begonia again, you're going to dress as a pussycat for Halloween" . . . "Because you tossed your ball in my cup of coffee, you don't get a valentine from me."

In those twenty years, when not tugging at the drapery cords, or delivery men, or tugboats, Peppy was tugging at our heartstrings. The little dog had wagged his way into our life and love. In the spring, the damp mist of an April shower on his fuzzy coat gave him the wispy image of a fairy-tale animal who had tiptoed out of a storybook. In the summer, the freshly cut grass and rose petals hung on his little whiskers. And in the fall, the autumn leaves blew like forest elves dancing around him . . . elves he could never catch. In the winter, the snow flakes played with him. And he would take great sniffs into the cold air as if reaching all the way to the North Pole or North Star.

We often thought about Peppy's little part in the supreme scheme of things, in the endless ecology of the world, in the great divine master plan of the universe. A hair didn't fall from his paw or a feather ever from a bird for which there

wasn't a reason. A wag of his tail caused a ripple in the dust on the moon. And the sound of his bark echoed along the Milky Way. As the English poet Francis Thompson wrote:

*All things by immortal power
Near or far
Hiddenly
To each other linked are,
That thou canst not
 stir a flower
Without troubling a star.*

And we thought, too, about something very far away . . . the beautiful gold doors wrought by Ghiberti on the Baptistery of Saint John the Baptist in Florence, Italy. So magnificent are they, that Michelangelo called them the doors of paradise. To every person in his own vision there is something on this earth that represents the golden door of paradise . . . the sixth happiness in the inn of life. To many that door, that happiness, is found in the eyes of an animal. This is one gateway to eternity.

The Odyssey Ends

*He knew his lord; he knew, and strove to meet;
In vain he strove to crawl and kiss his feet;
Yet (all he could) his tail, his ears, his eyes
Salute his master, and confess his joys. . . .
The dog, whom Fate had granted to behold
His lord, when twenty tedious years had roll'd,
Takes a last look, and, having seen him, dies:
So closed forever faithful Argus' eyes!*

—ALEXANDER POPE

“The Odyssey of Homer”

In the closing days of Peppy's life, we watched him in the yard in the warm sunlight—his hearing almost gone, his eyesight faded, his step faltering . . . and the flowers and the birds and the grasshoppers trying to help him along as his lifelong little friends. And when that day came for him to go to his long sleep, I thought my heart would break. I gathered him up in my arms and bade him a last good-bye. Then . . .

He ran to the water, and seated himself in a little boat which lay there. It was painted red and white, the sails gleamed like silver, and six swans, each with a gold circlet round its neck, and a bright blue star on its forehead, drew the boat past the great wood, where the trees tell of robbers and witches, and the flowers tell of the graceful little elves, and of what the butterflies have told them.

—HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN

* * *

*Oh, who goes there on the stair
Of Heav'n without a single prayer?*

*Oh, it's just a wagging tail,
Come in, but don't wag up a gale!*

*Oh, it's just four little paws,
And with eternal bone it gnaws.*

*Oh, it's just two big brown eyes,
No brighter stars are in these skies.*

*Oh, it's just two floppy ears
With which the cherubim he hears.*

*Oh, it's just a cold wet nose
That sniffed at every summer rose.*

*Oh, it's just a little flea,
Can it come in, too, is its plea?*

*Oh, it's just a shaggy coat
That splashed thru every bath and moat.*

*Oh, it's just a heav'nly dog,
We might have guessed by tail it wog!*

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Kelly, Mary Ann

"Rex" and the single girl

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